**Lesson- Details and Characters**

Creating a character that comes to life with a picture-

“Hurry up Lucille! We’re going to be late for the photographer!” a tired and ragged mother called from the stairwell. Lucille came straggling down in her favorite “American Princess” T-shirt, jeans, and barely brushed hair. She wasn’t wearing the outfit set out for her, or the new coordinating earrings her mother spent so much time searching for. But her mother scuttled her into the car anyways. At least she was wearing clothes right?

It was supposed to be the next step. Right after wedding her mother began the hounding, “When are you going to have children?... You know your not getting any younger…. Bruce isn’t either…. Do you think he’ll be able to play catch with your son if you wait until he’s 40 to start trying?” These comments were followed by similar, but less harsh ones from her friends, sisters, and even her hairdresser.

So have a child they did.

It was a long and difficult pregnancy, and a tumultuous time in her marriage. She kept thinking that once she had her son, everything would be okay again.

Only it wasn’t a son to carry on the family name. It was Lucille.

The difficulties during pregnancy should have been a forewarning of the years to come. Bruce left soon after Lucille was born. He wasn’t ready he said. He thought he was (perhaps because of the pressure) but he wasn’t. Frankly she wasn’t that surprised. Perhaps he’ll come around some day.

Lucille was into everything. She was a smart girl who always wanted to learn more, but this proved to be a very challenging predicament. She learned to walk early and was always getting into stuff. Her mother would have loved to put one of those cute leash backpacks on her, you know the ones that look like a monkey or a frog, but she was afraid of how other people would see her. “Why can’t she contain her child on her own?” they’d wonder.

She envied Lucille because she never seemed to worry about what others thought about her, although she did think about others a lot. She thought about other people all the time. She created stories in her head about each person as though they were a character in a story. She gave them problems and quests. Her mother loved hearing these stories, unless of course they were within an ear shot of the person being described, because… what then, would that person think of her and her daughter that she allows to make up fantastical (often conspericitorial and derogatory) stories about random strangers.

This is the story Lucille made up about the photographer (and began to tell him as they left… before her mother stopped her)

Raphael Paragolio lives in the top floor of this messy studio. He lives there with about a dozen cats because they are the only ones who can stand the stench of body odor mixed with prosciutto. He takes pictures of children for a living, so he says, but really he is running an underground meat market. He salts and cures Italian meats in the back and sells them to local families. Why salt and cure meats for the “black market” and have a fake photography business? Well I’ll tell you. Because the real Italians know you have to leave the meat out for days and days and let the flies get to it real good before it is ready, but Health Inspectors won’t have that. The flies help to tenderize the meat with their tiny legs as they dance over the salt and spices. That’s why there’s a car with an Italian grandma waiting outside with the engine running. They’re waiting for me to finish so she can get the meat.